

Media Statement

Attention Journalists and News Editors

Pretoria, 15 October 2018

MINISTER BATHABILE DLAMINI CALLS ON ALL SOUTH AFRICA'S TO OBSERVE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN

The Minister in the Presidency Responsible for Women, Ms. Bathabile Dlamini, has called on all South Africans to observe the International Day of Rural Women today, the 15th October 2018.

“Rural areas are the persistent sites of underdevelopment, poverty, and precarious land tenure systems. Most importantly, it is in the rural landscape that the expression of patriarchal traditional masculinities is most evident. These are propelled by inherited distortions of customary law. As we observe the period marked by the United Nations as the International Day of Rural Women today, it is paramount to think about the factors that distinguish the lived experiences of rural women from their urban counterparts, and to consider how the rapidly changing global and local social, economic and geopolitical environment impacts rural women uniquely,” said the Minister.

The theme for this year is “Sustainable infrastructure, services, and social protection for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.” As asserted by the United Nations, this theme places the empowerment of rural women at the heart of fulfilling the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The rapid transformation of global climate patterns contributes added burdens to the lived experiences of rural women, particularly their access to productive and natural resources.

“Foremost in recent debates on climate change is the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In light of changing weather patterns, technological advancements in geographic information systems, artificial intelligence and other technologies are increasingly eliminating the requirement for manual and informal agricultural labour – which affects women’s access to livelihoods the most,” continued the Minister.

The Minister therefore calls upon, and pleads with all South Africans to be active in contributing to rural transformation by including rural women in all their work and developmental projects. “For those in our society who care for the inclusive development of our country, the primary concern must be on how we can collectively ensure that the multiple forms of violence perpetrated on rural women – including lack of access to land, patriarchal and traditional forms of masculinities, rapid climate change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution – can be eliminated,” the Minister concluded.

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